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BENTON HARBOR, MICH., MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1948

14 PAGES

PRICE FIVE CENTS

WEATHER FORECAST	
Rain, continued mild tonight and Tuesday.	
TEMPERATURES	
Readings from Sun. noon to Mon. noon:	
12 p. 48	3 a. m. 47
3 p. m. 52	6 a. m. 47
6 p. m. 51	9 a. m. 46
12 m. 45	12 n. 54

'HUNCH' BRINGS SLAYER'S ARREST

Veteran Saves Fire Victim

\$90,000 NILES AIRPORT FIRE

MAIN HANGER AND 21 PLANES ARE DESTROYED

Niles City Firemen Struggle In Vain To Check Flames

The main hangar of the Niles airport and 21 airplanes were completely destroyed last night by a fire estimated to have caused at least \$90,000 worth of damage.

Exact cause of the blaze is not known, but firemen speculated that it started from a short in the ignition system of one of the planes and rapidly spread to the other aircraft housed in the big cement block and wood structure.

The fire was reported at 8:10 p. m. Sunday by residents living near the airport, which is located on Lake street northeast of the Niles city limits. The entire Niles fire department turned out but was unable to stem the flames until they had completely devoured the building and its contents.



Wreckage of main hangar at Niles airport, destroyed by fire last night. Twenty aircraft housed in the hangar also burned.

Miners' Walkout Underway; Meat Strike Due Tonight

CIO Offer Rejected By The Packers

CHICAGO, March 15 (AP)—Two of three major meat packers turned down yesterday an offer to arbitrate their wage dispute with the CIO United Packinghouse workers who have called a nationwide strike for 12:01 a. m. tomorrow.

The arbitration proposal was sent to Swift & Company, the Cudahy Packing company and Armour & Company but Swift and Cudahy quickly rejected it. They said they were standing pat on their offer of a nine-cent an hour wage boost.

The union, which had originally demanded a 25-cent an hour increase for its 100,000 members said it would call off the strike if the companies would accept arbitration of the 20 cents difference.

Armour has not replied to the proposal but the union said it would arbitrate with that company alone if it accepted.

Ralph Helstein, union president, said the offer will be kept open until midnight tonight, one minute before the strike is scheduled to start. The proposal, he added, provides

Meyers Given Prison Term

WASHINGTON, March 15 (AP)—Maj. Gen. Bennett E. Meyers today was sentenced to 20 months to five years in prison.

A federal jury convicted him last Friday on three counts of inducing a former business associate to lie under oath to a Senate committee.

Judge Alexander Holtzoff, when imposing, said the 52-year-old retired general was guilty of a "very grave and serious offense." The maximum sentence he could have imposed was 30 years.

Meyers stood erect and apparently unmoved, as Judge Holtzoff told him:

"Bennett E. Meyers, it is the judgment of this court that you be imprisoned in an institution to be designated by the attorney general of the United States for a term of not less than 20 months and not more than five years."

THE FORMAL ACCUSATION against Meyers was "subordination to perjury." He was charged with persuading Elliott Lamarr to lie to Senate investigators and cover up Meyers' wartime operation of a plane parts company from which the government alleged that Meyers received more than \$150,000. Lamarr was the president of the company, but later said he was only a "dummy" to Meyers.

In a court room statement, Holtzoff gave what amounted to an explanation of why he had not imposed a longer sentence. He said the three counts on which Meyers was convicted involved substantially the same offense.

While the possible penalty under each count was 10 years, he added, that was under a special District of Columbia statute whereas the general penalty for perjury is five years.

For sale good clean '39 Ford gas heater. Ph. 5-2082. —Adv.

Hagar Lake Shore Cemetery board meeting Tues., March 16, 7 p. m., Riverside Town Hall. —Adv.

Dorothy Wood is now with the Benedict Beniteria. Hours 9 to 5. 171 Pipestone. —Adv.

If you are beyond the gas mats, dial 5-2136 for information on Pyrene Bottled Gas. —Adv.

Alteration 104 W. Main St. Apply Fidelity Fur, 107 W. Main St. —Adv.

Sales Ladies, part or full time. Gd. salary & commission. Fidelity Fur, 107 W. Main. —Adv.

Bituminous Pits Closing Down Today

PITTSBURGH, March 15 (AP)—A soft coal work stoppage supporting John L. Lewis' demand for miner pensions got under way today. Spearhead of the move was in Western Pennsylvania, where early surveys indicated nearly one-half of 56,000 miners walked out.

The U. S. Steel Corp. reported nine of its 14 Western Pennsylvania pits were closed, with 7,000 miners idle. The corporation expected its coal output would drop today to about 20,000 tons, or one-third of capacity.

The Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. reported all its Pennsylvania and West Virginia mines were closed, and 4,600 miners idle.

Republic was another steel corporation affected, with three Pennsylvania mines down. The output of steel company-owned pits is used in making fuel for steel mills.

Commercial mines, too, whose production is sold on the open markets, began to shut. The giant Pittsburgh Coal company reported at least nine of its mines closed. Owners of some independent mines expected the movement to spread.

WALKOUTS STARTED in other leading coal states—West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois.

An early check showed at least 5,500 of Illinois' estimated 23,000 United Mine Workers idle. Their rival Progressive Mine Workers, estimated at 10,000, were reported working.

Miners said the walkouts backed up demand of Lewis, president of the United Mine workers, for \$100 monthly pensions for miners.

Two hundred and ten miners reported this morning to a Frick pit at nearby Bridgeville but returned home. The firm's mine at Muse, Pa., a few miles distant, did not open. The Bridgeville pit produces about 1,800 tons daily; the Muse operation about 5,000 tons.

The Bridgeville diggers milled around the mine lamp house but made no attempt to obtain their working lights.

Then as one of the miners "threw away his water"—the traditional signal of a work stoppage in which the miner pours his day's supply of drinking water on the ground—the men walked toward their homes.

The morning sirens sounded as usual but went unheeded by the miners, the first at 5:30 a. m. (EST) to signify work was scheduled today. The second was sounded at 6 a. m. to prepare the miners for work. The third at 6:30 would have sent the first group toward the pits and the final call at 6:45 a. m., was the normal sound to begin operations.

But the miners were on their

GAS STATION ATTENDANT IS BADLY BURNED

James Russell Owes Life To Quick Work Of Richard O'Leary

A 21-year-old, one-eyed, Navy veteran saved the life of a 69-year-old man late Saturday night when he saw him fleeing a fire at the Black Eagle service station on West Main street, with his clothes ablaze.

Richard O'Leary, 1120 McAllister avenue, was driving west on West Main street, when he saw James Russell run from the station. He said he resembled a human torch.

O'Leary quickly swung his car across the street into the station driveway, cutting Russell off. He leaped from his car and tackled the man, whose overalls were afire to his hips.

Taking his suit coat off, O'Leary said he quickly wrapped it around one leg at a time, smothering the flames.

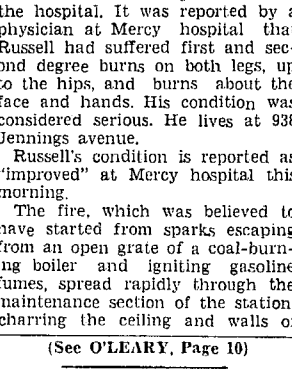
Meanwhile, Duane DeHaven, an attendant on duty with Russell summoned the fire department, and started fighting the blaze with a hand extinguisher.

WHEN FIREMEN ARRIVED they said O'Leary had succeeded in smothering Russell's flaming clothing and had him lying in a comfortable position. Firemen said they immediately summoned an ambulance to rush the injured man to the hospital. It was reported by a physician at Mercy hospital that Russell had suffered first and second degree burns on both legs, up to the hips, and burns about the face and hands. His condition was considered serious. He lives at 938 Jennings avenue.

Russell's condition is reported as "improved" at Mercy hospital this morning.

The fire, which was believed to have started from sparks escaping from an open grate of a coal-burning boiler and igniting gasoline fumes, spread rapidly through the maintenance section of the station, charring the ceiling and walls of

Saves Life



Richard O. Leary, 1120 McAllister avenue, Benton Harbor, is credited with saving the life of James Russell, gas station attendant, when the latter's clothing caught fire Saturday night. O'Leary lost an eye while serving in the Navy in World War II.

Taft, Brewster Unhurt In Crash

VASSALBORO, Me., March 15 (AP)—An airplane carrying Republican Presidential Aspirant Robert A. Taft and Senator Owen Brewster (R-Me) plunged today into the Kennebec river but Brewster said neither he, Taft nor the pilot was hurt.

Brewster said John T. Clark, pilot of the Maine Aeronautics commission plane, "did a great job" setting the craft down on the statehouse where Gov. Horace A. Hildreth dispatched his official car to help Taft keep Bangor speaking appointments.

The plane was slightly damaged.

Taft, Brewster and Clark made their way with some difficulty, Brewster said, to the snowy river bank and telephoned to the statehouse where Gov. Horace A. Hildreth dispatched his official car to help Taft keep Bangor speaking appointments.

SUSPICION BY SHERIFF LEADS TO CONFESSION

Negro Farm Worker Wanted By FBI For Killing Of Three

Sheriff Erwin H. Kubath followed up a "hunch" Sunday with a perfect fingerprint check and discovered that a Negro lodged in the Berrien county jail Saturday evening on a drunk charge is wanted by the FBI as a three-time murderer.

The alleged slayer, James Sylvester Biggs, 27, New Markham, Tenn., has waived extradition and is being held without bond at the county jail for Lake county, Tenn., officers who are expected to arrive here today or Tuesday.

Sheriff Kubath said that Biggs has confessed the fatal shooting Aug. 8, 1945, of Lawyer Burnette in Lake county, and also the murders in 1942 of two men whose last names he remembers as Englemier and Deaters. Biggs served 18 years in a Kentucky prison for the slaying of Englemier.

BIGGS WAS ARRESTED HERE about 6 p. m. Saturday by Sheriff Kubath and Deputy Victor Hatch on the Eisenhart farm, one-quarter of a mile south of Scottsdale on US-31.

Biggs has been living for about a year on the Eisenhart farm in a tenant house with a common-law wife, Mary Taylor, 38. His arrest followed a complaint from Scottsdale that he was drunk and disorderly in the village.

Kubath questioned Biggs while returning with him to the jail, but according to the sheriff, Biggs refused flatly to tell where he came from, whether or not he had ever been arrested before, or any other information regarding his past.

Kubath and Undersheriff Henry Griese continued questioning Biggs, who had given his name to the sheriff as James Payne, early Sunday morning. The prisoner still refused to answer.

Still without knowledge that anything more serious than a drunk charge hung over Biggs but suspicious because he refused to reveal any details of his past, Kubath fingerprinted the prisoner.

He made a painstaking evaluation of the prints, according to procedure established nationally by the FBI. The results were tabulated as a series of identifying numbers on the top of the fingerprint card.

Kubath checked these numbers against the numbers in the jail's file of several thousand on criminals wanted by the FBI and other law enforcement officials throughout the nation. His search ended when he found an FBI card whose identifying numbers tabulated exactly with those he had set down for the prisoner known as James Payne.

THE FBI CARD listed the man as James Sylvester Biggs, born at New Markham, Tenn., and wanted by the federal government on a charge of fleeing across state lines to escape prosecution for murder. The card had a picture of Biggs which was an exact likeness of the sheriff's prisoner.

Kubath immediately notified the Detroit office of the FBI and Tennessee authorities.

Confronted with the FBI card, Biggs broke down and readily admitted his identity and having murdered three men, the sheriff said.

Referring to his refusal to talk earlier, Biggs told the sheriff, "Any

Trapped By Fingerprints



Sheriff Kubath with James Sylvester Biggs, farm worker arrested for drunkenness but identified, the sheriff said, as the slayer of three persons in Tennessee. Confronted with fingerprint evidence, Biggs readily confessed being a fugitive, the sheriff said. The FBI has long sought Biggs. (News-Palladium photo).

Reds Seeking Local Support

Two Party Workers Arrested, Released

Two self-avowed members of the Communist party were questioned briefly by Sheriff Erwin H. Kubath Sunday afternoon after several residents in the east Benton Harbor complained to the sheriff's office that the pair was creating a disturbance.

Kubath said that Max Chaff, 26, and Faye Grossman, 27, both of Detroit told him they were members of the Communist party and that they were in Benton Harbor to solicit signatures on petitions necessary to put the names of their party's candidates on the Michigan September program ballot.

The sheriff said they showed him petitions carrying the signatures of nearly 100 persons residing

25 Trapped By Blast; 2 Known Dead

LOUISVILLE, Ky., March 15 (AP)—An explosion at the plant of the International Harvester company here today killed at least two persons, injured about 26 and trapped 25 others in debris, company officials reported.

Police and firemen, aided by volunteers, dug desperately in the ruins of the 150 by 75-foot brick and steel engine test building to rescue the trapped.

No casualty list was available immediately as the injured, many blackened beyond recognition, were taken to hospitals.

RESCUE WORK WAS HAMPERED by intense heat from a fire which broke out shortly after the explosion. This was extinguished by city and county firemen.

The explosion occurred as the night shift was leaving and the day shift reporting. Normally about 56 persons work in the building which joins the main plant in the rear.

42 Dogs, Four Cats Destroyed By Fire

KALAMAZOO, March 15 (AP)—The animal shelter of the Kalamazoo County Humane society was destroyed by fire early Sunday morning at a loss estimated by President Walter Kelley at about \$35,000.

Forty-two dogs and four cats were lost in the flames and all the records and valuable equipment were destroyed. Firemen from four departments were forced to stand by watching the building burn to the ground after the available water supply had been exhausted.

James Hurlbert, caretaker, was awakened just in time by the barking of his own dog. The next door home of Joseph Gatwood, was ignited, but was saved, as were two trucks, including the animal ambulance.

President Kelly announced today rebuilding operations would be started at once, nearly three-fourths of the necessary amount having been raised in a building fund campaign begun in three years ago.

Potted plants at Juffermans', 1844 Colfax. Reasonable prices. —Adv.

Clinders—All you want, the best. Linnard, del. Ph. 3-7017. —Adv.

Everybody Asked To Help Spring Cleanup Campaign Planned Here In April

Public spirited citizens were called on today by city authorities and civic organizations to mobilize for a city-wide cleanup campaign next month.

Object of the drive is to remove winter's grime, paint business and residential properties, clean up yards, streets and alleys and improve Benton Harbor's appearance. The campaign will be the most intensive ever staged here.

Spearheading the drive are the Retail Merchants association, Parent-Teachers association, luncheon clubs, board of education and the schools.

The cleanup committee on arrangements include Reid Sprague, manager of the Kresge store; Leonard Cassler, general manager of

Cutler & Downing; Walter Marquardt, owner of the Marquardt Hardware; Dewey Klime of the Klime Paint store and R. W. Shauman, advertising manager of The News-Palladium, chairman.

The committee recently met with City Manager H. H. Crow and was assured of the city's assistance and co-operation.

A second meeting will be held at the city hall tomorrow evening at 7:30 to make further plans. The meeting is open to the public.

Ball's Clothiers on the 4th corners in B. H. are now open Sat. nights 'til 9 p. m. Hours week days 9 to 6. Sat. 9 to 9. —Adv.

Enterprise Cleaners, Ph. 6904—Adv.

Road To Title

Announce Basketball Tourney Pairings, Sites

LANSING, March 15 (AP)—Pairing and locations for the quarter-final round of the state high school basketball championships Wednesday were announced today by Charles E. Forsythe, interscholastic athletic director.

CLASS A

Benton Harbor vs Grand Rapids Christian, Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, 8:30 p. m.

Fort Huron vs Highland Park, Pontiac high school, 8:30 p. m.

Jackson vs Dearborn, Boys Vocational School, Lansing, 8:30 p. m.

Flint Central vs Midland, Arthur Hill high school, Saginaw, 8:30 p. m.

CLASS B

St. Joseph vs Marshall, Kalamazoo College, 7:30 p. m.

Detroit St. Andrew vs Detroit St. Gregory, Ferndale high school, 7:30 p. m.

Flint Kearsley vs Fremont, Sexton high school, Lansing, 8:30 p. m.

Rogers City vs Bessemer, Gaylord high school, 7:30 p. m.

CLASS C

Milan vs Berrien Springs, Albion College, 7:30 p. m.

Keego Harbor vs Flint All-Saints, Pontiac high school, 7 p. m.

See PAIRINGS, Page 10

Grant, Sexton high school, Lansing 7 p. m.

Charlevoix vs Ontonagon, Petoskey high school, 8:30 p. m.

CLASS D

Bridgman vs Hopkins, Western Michigan College 7 p. m.

Clewson Log Cabin vs Dimondale, Boys Vocational School, Lansing, 7 p. m.

Merrill vs Michigan school for the deaf of Flint, Arthur Hill high school, Saginaw, 7 p. m.

Kingsley vs Mass, Petoskey high school, 7 p. m.

Semi-Final Pairing

Winners of the Benton Harbor-Grand Rapids Christian Class A game will play the winners of the Fort Huron-Highland Park game

See PAIRINGS, Page 10

'38 Olds 6, four dr. sedan. Motor in fine cond. 5 practically new tires. New brakes, rings, spark plugs, new battery & muffler. R. & h. & defroster. Clean inside. 386 Parker. Ph. 5-1537. —Adv.

For sale, 3 gd. truck tires. 7.50x20 40 ply with tubes. \$50. Ph. 9719 even. —Adv.